

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CALCUT 00770 090349Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 /037 W
-----047518 090425Z /23

R 090141Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
INFO USDOC WASHDC
SECSTATE WASHDC 6648
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

UNCLAS CALCUTTA 0770

NEW DELHI FOR USAID

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BEXP, IN
SUBJECT: GOWB NEED IMMEDIATE IMPORTS OF FIVE GAS/DIESEL POWER
GENERATORS

REF: A. CALCUTTA 0680; B. CALCUTTA 0598

1. SYED MUSTAQE MURSHED, NEWLY APPOINTED POWER COMMISIONER FOR WEST BENGAL STATED 3 MAY DURING A SOCIAL OCCASION THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL (GOWB) WAS SERIOUS IN ITS EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE FIVE GAS/DIESEL POWERED GENERATORS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE STATED THAT BRITISH GE AND WESTINGHOUSE REPRESENTATIVES HAVE ALREADY MET WITH HIM IN HIS OFFICE AND TALKS ARE IN PROGRESS. THE BRITISH REPRESENTATIVES CLAIMED THEY COULD HAVE THE GENERATORS IN OPERATION IN EIGHT MONTHS. THE BRITISH DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THE SOCIAL OCCASION, STATED THAT THE GENERATORS
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COULD BE ACQUIRED AS PART OF A BRITISH AID PACKAGE IF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (GOI) APPROVED. MURSHED SAID THAT HE AND GOWB CHIEF MINISTER JYOTI BASU INTENDED TO USE ALL THEIR PERSUASIVE POWER ON PRIME MINISTER DESAI IN ORDER TO GET EXPEDITIOUS APPROVAL FOR THE DEAL.

2. MURSHED ALSO STATED THAT HE WANTED TO INVESTIGATE ALL AVENUES AND THEREFORE REMAINED INTERESTED IN TALKING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. COMPANIES WHO COULD SUPPLY THE GENERATORS. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER U.S. GENERATORS COULD BE ACQUIRED AS PART OF RENEWED U.S. AID OR THROUGH SOME OTHER MEANS, BY WHICH GOWB WOULD NOT HAVE TO PAY FOR THEM. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THERE ARE NO U.S. GOVT. POSSIBILITIES ALONG THESE GRANT OR CONCESSIONAL LINES.

3. MURSHED COMMENTED THAT WHILE HE IS AWARE THE FIVE GENERATORS WILL NOT SOLVE THE MOST IMMEDIATE AND VERY PRESSING PROBLEM, WHICH IS A COMBINATION OF LABOR AGITATION AND POOR MAINTENANCE AT THE EXISTING POWER PLANTS, THE ACQUISITION OF THE FIVE UNITS WILL END THE GOWB'S DEPENDENCE ON THE TROUBLED EXISTING PLANTS FOR THE SUPPLY OF POWER TO THE PEOPLE OF CALCUTTA.

4. MURSHED ALSO SAID THAT CHIEF MINISTER BASU CALLS HIM EACH NIGHT AT HIS HOME TO CHECK ON THE PROGRESS HE IS MAKING IN ACQUIRING THE GENERATORS.

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Subject: GOWB NEED IMMEDIATE IMPORTS OF FIVE GAS/DIESEL POWER GENERATORS
TAGS: BEXP, IN
To: NEW DELHI BANGKOK
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